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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SEVENTH MEETING (PART II) (closed-resumption 4)

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 25 February 1991, at 11.00 p.m.

President:	Mr. MUMBENGEGWI	(Zimbabwe)
Members:	Austria	Mr. HOHENFELLNER
	Belgium	Mr. NOTERDAEME
	China	Mr. LI Daoyu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. ANET
	Cuba	Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA
	Ecuador	Mr. AYALA LASSO
	France	Mr. BLANC
	India	Mr. GHAREKHAN
	Romania	Mr. MUNTEANU
	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. VORONTSOV
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David HANNAY
	United States of America	Mr. PICKERING
	Yemen	Mr. AL-ASHTAL
	Zaire	Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA

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READEX FICHE

The meeting was resumed at 11.15 p.m. on Monday, 25 February 1991.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to the following documents: S/22260 and S/22264, letters dated 23 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council; S/22261, letter dated 23 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; S/22262, letter dated 24 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council; and S/22265, letter dated 25 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I have been instructed by the Soviet leadership to report to the Security Council that just a few hours ago a message was received in Moscow from the President of Iraq, Mr. Saddam Hussein, addressed to the President of the USSR, Mikhail S. Gorbachev. The message reads as follows:

"The Iraqi leadership has decided in accordance with resolution 660 (1990) immediately to withdraw all its troops from Kuwait.

"The order to that effect has already been issued.

"I request you to make urgent efforts for the adoption of a resolution of the United Nations Security Council calling for a cease-fire. The timeframe for the implementation of the troop withdrawal, which has already begun, will be very brief."

I believe that urgent message from the Iraqi President requires no explanation by the Soviet delegation. I should just like to stress that, as the Iraqis have declared, the troop withdrawal has already begun, and accordingly the Security Council can adopt the relevant decision.

Mr. AL-ASHTAL (Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): First of all, I wish to thank the Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Vorontsov, for his initiative in calling for this resumed meeting of the Council and for the message he has jsut conveyed .

Six and a half months after the outbreak of this crisis, which has now turned into a large-scale war, we are on the threshold of a peaceful diplomatic solution.

(Mr. Al-Ashtal, Yemen)

If the Security Council is to play a big part in resolving this crisis it must adopt the necessary decision to end the crisis with the implementation of its resolutions, foremost among which is resolution 660 (1990).

We have been informed by the representative of the Soviet Union of the message sent to the President of the Soviet Union by President Saddam Hussein that Iraq has decided to withdraw, that it intends to withdraw within a very short time and that orders to withdraw have been issued. The Security Council must therefore take the necessary decision so that the withdrawal is organized and orderly and so that any further bloodshed in the war may be prevented.

Accordingly, the delegation of Yemen proposes formally that we adopt a resolution affirming in its preamble the resolutions that the Council has adopted, beginning with resolution 660 (1990) and including all the other relevant resolutions. It would then demand a cease-fire, determine the period within which the withdrawal would take place - a short period of time - and organize supervision by the United Nations of the withdrawal process.

We hope that such a resolution will be adopted as soon as possible: so that Kuwait may be liberated, so that its sovereignty may be restored, so that hostilities may cease, and so that we may start building peace in the area.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): I thank my Soviet colleague for having brought us this message this evening.

I want to begin my few remarks tonight by noting that within the past half hour my Government in Washington has reacted to the announcement which we all heard some hours earlier from Baghdad Radio relating to a somewhat similar development. In that regard, I should like to point out that the United States has made it clear that up to this point we continue to prosecute our efforts to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait, using the military force authorized by the Council.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

At this stage we see no reason to change that approach. Our primary concern continues to be, of course, the safety of our own forces and the forces of the coalition. We made it clear that we had heard the Radio Baghdad report, but, first and foremost, we have no way of knowing whether indeed it was a true report. We seem to have heard a slightly different, perhaps somewhat more optimistic, report this evening, but we have seen on the ground - and I am sorry to say this - no evidence of an Iraqi withdrawal.

Iraq, as we all know, has tended to use these statements from time to time as methods of propaganda in a duplicitous fashion and in some cases as ruses of war. We recall the arrival of the Iraqi tanks just some weeks ago at Khafji, when the tanks approached the coalition positions in an attitude of surrender but then immediately turned their gun turrets and did battle.

We are also facing continuing attacks by Scuds, which have today unfortunately taken their highest toll in human life - some 22 American citizens and perhaps, unfortunately, more.

We also noted the fact that we understand that Saddam Hussein has declared that his forces will fight their way out of Kuwait. We have made it very clear that we have no intention of attacking retreating forces. But such forces should certainly lay down their arms and leave. If they are moving as a combat unit with combat equipment, then in our view they are still subject to the rules of war.

We have also made it very clear that we have not rejected anything. We are anxious to have in fact a serious proposal put forward by the Government of Iraq. I sit here tonight and look around this Chamber and notice one startling peculiarity: there is a seat at the end of the table with the nameplate of a country in which we have the most serious interest, and yet - maybe because of the exigencies of the moment, because of the rapidity with which we are meeting,

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

maybe in fact because of the thesis that the actions of the Council have no legitimacy, no legality, in the absence of the Permanent Representative of Iraq; I do not know - whatever the reason may be, we have something here that may speak louder than words, in the absence of a clear position stated before the Council by the Government of Iraq in the person of the Permanent Representative of that country, who is here in this town. I would hope he would come. I would hope he would tell us what his position is, as we have asked. We should like to hear from Saddam Hussein personally and publicly what his position is with respect to this latest step.

As I have said, we have been subjected to many duplicitous statements in the past. I assure you, Mr. President, that I am ready to come back. If the representative of Iraq is ready to attend, I am ready to stay here on call, ready for whatever you might think is the appropriate way to receive the answer. I would hope that the answer is ringingly positive and fully supportive of the resolutions of the Security Council.

We ask no more than that Iraq make clear to us - whenever it is ready but, hopefully, much sooner rather than later - that it is prepared to accept the resolutions of the Security Council and that it is prepared to accept the method of implementation contained in the statement of the coalition partners made on their behalf by President Bush on 22 February.

Mr. GHAREKHAN (India): I should like first to thank Ambassador Vorontsov, the Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union, for bringing to the Council's attention an important communication from his Government. We welcome and deeply appreciate the continued efforts made by President Gorbachev and the Soviet Government to find a peaceful solution to this tragic crisis.

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

As I said on a previous occasion, my country and my delegation are deeply distressed at the continued loss of life, whether Kuwaiti or Iraqi or American. Loss of life is loss of life: we make no distinction; we feel equally distressed and depressed at this continued loss of life and damage to property.

My delegation can appreciate the point of view of those Governments that would like to have an authoritative representative of the Government of Iraq come here and state its position, whatever it is, to the Security Council. I think this is an understandable and perfectly legitimate point of view.

At the same time, my delegation feels that a communication from the President of the Soviet Union, read out by its representative in the Security Council, cannot be treated lightly. As far as my delegation is concerned, the statement read out by Ambassador Vorontsov carries authentic information. We have no reason to doubt its veracity or the message it is conveying.

The message brought by Ambassador Vorontsov seems to be pretty clear - and here I interrupt myself to note the arrival here within the last few seconds of the representative of Iraq. This is quite welcome not only to my delegation but, I hope, to other delegations also. As I was saying, the message brought by Ambassador Vorontsov is clear: the Government of Iraq is prepared to withdraw without any pre-conditions whatsoever. That is my delegation's understanding of this communication.

We would all recall that the earlier Soviet proposal, which the Soviet delegation presented to us on Saturday, was a six-point plan. Today there seems to be only one point - namely, immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. My delegation cannot but welcome this announcement, this initiative, which it would seem is closer than it ever has been to what was contained in the proposal of the coalition.

(Mr. Gharekhan, India)

Therefore, my delegation welcomes and supports this initiative as well as the suggestion made by the representative of the Soviet Union.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): The Government of Kuwait wishes to express to the friendly Soviet Union and its leadership, including President Gorbachev, its appreciation for their efforts to ensure the establishment of a just peace between Iraq and Kuwait.

The Security Council adopted 12 resolutions on Iraq's aggression against and occupation of Kuwait. These resolutions were communicated to the Government of Iraq by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Thus, the Government of Iraq should not consider the crushing of its brutal aggression against my country as an acceptance of the fait accompli. The Iraqi Government must first communicate to the Secretary-General in writing its acceptance of the 12 resolutions adopted by the Security Council - in the same way as the resolutions were communicated to it by the Secretary-General. Once that has been done, once the Secretary-General receives an official letter from the Iraqi Government, then - and only then - will it be possible to say that Iraq's defeat on the soil of Kuwait has gone beyond the fait accompli and has been changed into an acceptance of the 12 resolutions.

Mere withdrawal cannot in any way mean an end to the dispute. This dispute has political, economic and legal consequences. All these consequences have been expressed in resolutions adopted by the Security Council. Thus, acceptance of the resolutions would open the way to dealing with the consequences of the Iraqi aggression against the State of Kuwait. The crushing of the aggression and Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait would not change anything, in the final analysis.

Those are my comments so far as the form is concerned.

As for the credibility of the Iraqi regime, its record is, regrettably, replete with examples of its lack of credibility.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

It is characteristic for this regime to renege on its promises. The members of the Council are all aware that the leader of the Iraqi regime, who aggressed against Iran, tore up the Algiers Agreement he signed with Iran after his aggression against that country, and that after his second aggression, against Kuwait, he resuscitated it. Thus we face a unique phenomenon in international dealings that does not depend on the sincerity of promises and actions.

That is why the situation is too complicated to be considered ended once the forces have been withdrawn. Iraq is responsible to this Council, as are its legislative bodies, to revoke its Parliament's decision to annex Kuwait and to consider it its nineteenth province. It must rescind all resolutions and decisions adopted and issued by the Iraqi Government in this regard.

We are surprised that, at a time when Iraq claims it has begun withdrawing its troops, it has struck at Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia's civilians with its missiles. We have seen it burning the oilfields in Kuwait. The number of them burning has now reached more than 500 - half the Kuwaiti production. Not to mention the aggressive actions against defenceless Kuwaitis - the torture, destruction and murder, and the demolition of public buildings by Iraqi tanks using phosphorous bombs - all acts of ferocious revenge.

What the invading Iraqi forces did in Khorramshahr on the eve of Iraq's withdrawal therefrom gives us a clear picture of what the Iraqi forces are doing now in Kuwait City, at a time when they claim to be withdrawing from Kuwait.

We in Kuwait reject anything less than an official letter from the Iraqi regime addressed to the Council or to the Secretary-General, which must include acceptance of all the Security Council resolutions. That is the only thing that can lead to the consideration of any other measures to be taken later.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Iraq.

Mr. AL-ANBARI (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): Before I express the official position of my Government on Security Council resolution 660 (1990), I would recall that the person sitting to my right and several of the members sitting around this table have once or twice protested my not mentioning Kuwait in previous statements. Kuwait has always existed as a geographic fact, but its constitutional position was in question.

Iraq has expressed its determination to withdraw from Kuwaiti territories in implementation of resolution of 660 (1990), in a manner I shall make perfectly clear. It is, however, ironic to hear such insults from this person and his claimed victories and other things he has said. I am reminded of an Arab joke that I shall now tell in English, so that everybody understands:

(spoke in English)

"A mule was asked who his father was. After a while, the mule said 'Well, my uncle is a horse'".

That is the answer to the boasting of this individual about victories and achievements, and to the conditions and preconditions he has just stated before the Council.

(spoke in Arabic)

Throughout this day I have been in contact with several of my colleagues, including Your Excellency, Mr. President, and Ambassador Vorontsov of the Soviet Union, and I am aware of what he communicated to the Council. I should like to affirm here that my Government completely supports what the Soviet Ambassador has told the Council. I would add that the Iraqi Government, while accepting resolution 660 (1990), which it seeks to implement fully, has already issued orders to Iraqi troops in Kuwait to withdraw to their positions before 2 August 1990.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

Iraq is interested in completing its withdrawal as quickly as possible, in a manner that guarantees the safety of our troops in the withdrawal process and ensures that the withdrawal proceeds in an orderly fashion.

Therefore the Foreign Minister of Iraq has informed his Soviet counterpart of a message from President Saddam Hussein to President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union, in which he asks the latter to make efforts to achieve a cease-fire resolution so that the Iraqi troops can withdraw as quickly as possible in a manner that guarantees their safety and prevents their being subjected to aggression.

At this meeting I reiterate my request that the Council immediately adopt a resolution for a cease-fire in which it establishes the necessary machinery to guarantee respect for the cease-fire and the completion of the withdrawal of Iraqi troops as soon as possible.

I do not want to give an opportunity to some who would like to fish in murky waters. I should like to confine myself to what I have already said. But I feel I must say that there are certain parties who have never been interested in the safety of Kuwait, or in international legitimacy, or in the Security Council. They have secret objectives that entail the elimination of Iraq and its military capability, and they have carried out their aggression under the umbrella of the Council and its resolutions.

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

In response to our request today to implement resolution 660 (1990), on the basis of which all the other resolutions were adopted, those parties will find pretexts to violate that resolution. They will set conditions and preconditions incompatible with the spirit and the letter of resolution 660 (1990). Aware as I am of the objectives of some countries to preclude an orderly withdrawal and achieve continuation of the war in the area to serve their aggressive aims, I wished to mention this in advance.

Sir David HANNAY (United Kingdom): I am glad to be speaking after the representative of Iraq because, as I said at an earlier stage in our discussions this evening, I think it is absolutely essential that we conduct our business on the basis of the clearly defined and announced policy of the Government of Iraq through its own representative, and it is useful indeed to have heard that now. I do not wish by saying so to belittle in any way the communication brought to us by the representative of the Soviet Union. I think it was of great value that he was able to convey that message and that we were able therefore to begin this meeting, but we certainly could not conclude it without hearing direct from the representative of the Government of Iraq the position of his country.

That will remain the case, because this is not just a sort of formalistic problem. It is quite simply that we are trying to restore the rule of international law, and that rule has been broken by the Government of Iraq, and it is the willingness - and the extent of the willingness - of the Government of Iraq to be bound by that rule of law which is the crucial condition for returning to peace from the present, current situation. So it will be the words of the Government of Iraq, spoken through its representative here, which will matter to us.

Now, I must confess that I found the first part of the representative of Iraq's statement pretty worrying, quite apart from the joke in rather poor taste at

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

the expense of my friend from Kuwait. What I found worrying was - if I understood him correctly - and I apologize if the interpretation got it wrong - that he is stating now that his country has no problem with describing Kuwait as a geographical area, but he does not accept it as a constitutional entity. That, I am afraid, is at the heart of all our problems. If he is able to contradict me and to explain what he said after I have spoken, that will no doubt help, but if that is what he is saying then we are not as far forward as I had hoped we were.

Secondly, I note that he mentions only resolution 660 (1990), as if that resolution were somehow different in nature from all the other resolutions that the Council has adopted on the dispute between Iraq and Kuwait. But, frankly, that is not so. Those resolutions are a single corpus of international law adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, and they are a single whole. They cannot be taken to pieces and dealt with one by one as a process of negotiation. If anybody in this room doubts it, I would recommend that he turn to resolution 678 (1990), which is the basis on which the current action by my country and others cooperating with the Government of Kuwait is being taken, and there he will see that it is stated quite categorically that the Council is determined to secure full compliance with its decisions, all of which are referred to above, that it demands that Iraq comply fully with resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions, and that it authorizes the Member States cooperating with the Government of Kuwait to use all necessary means to implement Security Council resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent resolutions.

So this division between resolution 660 (1990) and the other resolutions does not exist in the jurisprudence of the Council and is not a basis for the taking of decisions by it. So I am afraid that the distinctions that were made this evening are extremely revealing, but they are not a basis on which we are going to move

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

forward very fast. If the representative of Iraq could tell me that this was all a mistake on my part and that his Government intends to comply with and implement all the other resolutions, then nobody will be happier than I.

Finally, I would just say this: the news that has been conveyed to us by the representative of the Soviet Union and now confirmed by the representative of Iraq has come very suddenly. It has now got to be examined very carefully by my Government - that will be done very rapidly too - and we will have to consider how best to move ahead. But my Government, along with other Governments cooperating with the Government of Kuwait, set out very clearly on 22 February the basis on which it would be prepared to consider the withdrawal from Kuwait by Iraqi forces and the military and political provisions that would accompany that.

These matters are set out very carefully in a document that was conveyed to the Government of Iraq. I have not yet heard from any representative of the Government of Iraq - other than in a fairly vituperative way from spokesmen on Baghdad Radio - any response to that document. But a response to that document we will need if we are to move forward, and I hope that the representative of Iraq will be able to get instructions from his capital to respond to that document and the terms that were set out in it, because it remains as germane today as it was the day on which it was uttered, which was last Friday.

As I say, I will now be seeking the instructions of my Government as to the formal response to make to the developments of this evening, but these points I have made will certainly be of great importance to my Government when formulating those instructions.

Mr. LI Daoyu (China) (interpretation from Chinese): First of all, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representative of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Vorontsov, for the communication he has conveyed to us.

According to that message, the leadership of Iraq has decided, in accordance with Security Council resolution 660 (1990), immediately to withdraw its troops from Kuwait. In our view this is a positive factor in the evolution of events in the Gulf crisis. We welcome it. We hope that Iraq will immediately take action and implement that decision and complete its withdrawal in the shortest possible time.

The Chinese Government has stood all along for a peaceful solution of the Gulf crisis within the framework of the resolutions of the Security Council. We are deeply concerned and disquieted by the huge loss of life and property as a result of the war. We hope that the parties concerned will take advantage of this opportunity to exercise the utmost restraint and take action immediately so as to create favourable conditions for the earliest possible conclusion of the war and a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis.

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

In view of this new development, we believe that the Security Council should give serious consideration to the role it should play and help to promote Iraq's speedy and complete withdrawal and a comprehensive and peaceful solution of the Gulf crisis.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Iraq.

Mr. AL-ANBARI (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): I did not intend to speak a second time, but I should not like to see the debate being pulled in all directions or to see anyone have the opportunity to avoid a discussion on this very important situation - a discussion which should be based on Iraq's new position which I communicated to the Council a few minutes ago.

I should like to answer Sir David Hannay's question on Kuwait. It is undeniable that Kuwait is a geographic fact. When I mentioned this point earlier, I meant that I had never referred to Kuwait by name in other statements simply because I had found no need to do so. As a geographic fact, Kuwait still stands; it is there.

Now, the situation is different, of course. My country's decision to withdraw from Kuwait in accordance with Security Council resolution 660 (1990) confirms what we have always said: that all should adhere to international law, which should be applied universally and equally. That is the essence of Iraq's initiative of 12 August 1990, which has been criticized and ignored on the pretext that it links one question or issue to the other.

We now hear that all the resolutions adopted by the Council over the past five months must be implemented immediately - although some of them would take years to implement, even if everyone wished to do so. We know what it will take to implement resolution 660 (1990) alone. I should now like to affirm that Iraq will not accept anyone at this meeting to address questions that have nothing to do with that resolution. My Government is interested in seeing - indeed eager to see - the

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

Council adopt a resolution that would guarantee the complete and rapid implementation of resolution 660 (1990), after which the necessary measures should be considered and adopted in order to implement what can or should be implemented in other resolutions.

Without addressing the substance of the other resolutions, I should just like to point out that some have already been implemented, such as that making it possible for foreigners living in Kuwait and Iraq to leave should they so desire. There was no difficulty in implementing that resolution. The difficulty is not a technical one; it simply requires serious study, goodwill and the desire to bring peace and stability to the region. We must find proposals and solutions for every problem we face.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. ABULHASAN (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): It is no honour for me, either as an individual or as the representative of a State, to lower myself to the position of the representative of the agressive regime in making what he intended to be a joke. It was a joke in poor taste, reflecting the level of his character and the character of his regime. That is my first point.

My second point - the main point - is this. The statement of the representative of the aggressive regime confirmed what all of us had feared: that the aggressive regime would be selective about the measures recommended by the Council vis-à-vis its aggression. After its miserable defeat, every soldier who has surrendered to escape the hell of battle has stated that he was forced to do what he was doing and that he did not believe in it. And more than 25,000 prisoners of war have been taken in just the past 48 hours.

Once the situation had reached this point, the Iraqi Government was forced to select withdrawal; this was imposed on it by virtue of its defeat. The Iraqi regime disregards all other elements. We even heard the representative of the

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

aggressive regime inventing this new legal interpretation: that Kuwait is a geographic fact. But he does not accept it as a constitutional fact. The representative of Iraq has referred to the constitutional fact, but the Security Council speaks of the constitutional fact in its resolution 662 (1990). Iraq's constitutional fact is the one on which it based its annexation of Kuwait to its territory - annexation which the representative of Iraq has stated in the Council is irreversible and final. When Iraq annexed Kuwait illegally, the very representative who is here now said that the legislation annexing Kuwait was final. The verbatim records will bear that out.

How can we agree to a cease-fire, which is tantamount to considering that the aggression did not happen or was inconsequential? How can we turn a blind eye to resolution 662 (1990), which considers the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq null and void? How can the representative of Iraq ask us to forget resolution 667 (1990), which condemns Iraq's closing of the foreign missions in Kuwait?

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

How can we ignore resolution 674 (1990), which deals with reparations and the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the situation in Kuwait and Kuwaiti prisoners since 2 August? The number of Kuwaitis who have disappeared exceeds 20,000; they are now suffering in Iraqi prisons.

How can we forget the damages suffered by the citizens of 104 countries who lived in Kuwait until 1 August? However, the representative of the Iraqi regime hastened to say that some of the resolutions have already been implemented. He remembers those resolutions, but he links the resolutions dealing with constitutional requirements - resolutions 662 (1990), 667 (1990) and 674 (1990) - to what he called the 2 August initiative.

Hence we are still in the same position we were on 2 August, that is, the insistence of the Iraqi regime which, in view of very difficult circumstances, accepts only part of resolution 660 (1990) - the part concerning withdrawal.

I should like to put the same question my colleague of Austria put to the representative of Iraq last week: Is the Government of Iraq ready to implement paragraph 3 of resolution 660 (1990) with the legitimate Kuwaiti Government - the very resolution the representative of the Iraqi regime claims to accept?

There is another point, one which Sir David Hannay explained in detail. It relates to the military operations authorized by the Security Council. These operations have been authorized to secure implementation of not only resolution 660 (1990) but also all relevant resolutions. Those who included these resolutions did not seek only withdrawal, and hence the rewarding of the aggressor, for we would be facing a very dangerous situation were we to allow an aggressor like the Iraqi regime to launch aggression in the future against a neighbouring country and later withdraw without punishment, without paying for what it has done. Were we to do this, we would be following the law of the jungle.

(Mr. Abulhasan, Kuwait)

That is why resolution 678 (1990) referred to the use of force until Iraq implements all the 12 resolutions of the Security Council. Thus, selectivity in the process of choosing resolutions is unacceptable.

Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): My delegation had the opportunity to express its view on 23 February, following upon the statement of the representative of the USSR. But, in the light of the new developments, my delegation will continue, along with the other members of the Council, the in-depth discussion on the current stage of the question. Hence it reserves its right to revert to the matter in due course.

But my brief statement - or, rather, my comment - relates to the statement made a few days ago by the representative of a Member State when he referred to pygmies in pejorative terms.

As the representative of Zaire, whose population is nearly 36 million, including approximately 400,000 pygmies enjoying all rights in the country, I should like to say that pygmies are fully fledged human beings and cannot be treated in a discriminatory fashion because of their size, since the size of a human being has never been a criterion for any scale of values.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Iraq.

Mr. AL-ANBARI (Iraq): I shall speak in English so as to avoid misunderstanding of the kind our colleague from Zaire has just complained about.

As members know, the other day I spoke in Arabic and I used the word "gizim", which is the equivalent of the English word "dwarf". When I noted the inaccurate translation, I immediately brought the Secretariat's attention to the meaning of the Arab word I used, and the Secretariat has corrected the record accordingly. So I assure my friend from Zaire that we have full respect for the human dignity of pygmies and other human beings, whether in or outside of Zaire. My intention was

(Mr. Al-Anbari, Iraq)

solely in the word "gizim", which means nothing but "dwarf". So I hope that his fears are now laid to rest.

However, with all due respect to my friend from Zaire, I have to say that I am afraid that there seems to be some attempts on the part of some members attending this meeting to convert it from a serious in-depth discussion of a very critical situation now prevailing in the Gulf to deal with side issue and, I would say, irrelevant issues, for I assume that by now he must have read the correction and be assured that there was no ill-intention or ill-meaning on my part because I was speaking in Arabic and we have no word actually for pygmies except pygmies, and I did use the word for dwarf.

Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all, I should like to thank the representative of the Soviet Union for the information he reported to us and to take this opportunity to repeat our gratitude to the Government of the Soviet Union and President Gorbachev personally for their tireless efforts, which continue in an attempt to put an end as soon as possible to this conflict that has caused such loss of life and material destruction.

I would not like to see this meeting of the Council ending - I believe there are no further speakers - without offering some reflections.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

For something more than six months the world has been the anguished witness to a conflict that began on 2 August 1990 with the occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi forces. The Security Council has been devoting sustained attention to this matter.

For something more than six months, at every meeting, all Council members have expressed the wish for full compliance as soon as possible with resolution 660 (1990), the first adopted by the Council on this matter. In many different ways we have repeated to the Iraqi authorities our wish for a withdrawal of their forces from Kuwaiti territory.

Tonight, the representative of Iraq once again, as he had done on Saturday, confirmed his Government's decision to act in that way and, as I heard Ambassador Al-Anbari say, to accept resolution 660 (1990) and its complete implementation.

One might have imagined that this would be a night of rejoicing in this Chamber, and an opportunity for all of us, with the same enthusiasm seen on earlier occasions last year, to proceed rapidly and effectively to create the necessary conditions and circumstances so that the resolution could finally be fully implemented.

The representative of Yemen orally put forward what could be the basic ideas for a draft resolution that would not appear to be excessively complicated were the Security Council ready, in line with what has been stated by all for half a year now, to note that its main objective - the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait and the restoration of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Kuwait - had at last been achieved, and to do so quickly.

But we have witnessed an exercise that has taken place here more than once ever since the Soviet delegation told us of its initiative, an exercise which could put the Council in a position that is absurd to say the least, and one which I as a member do not like to see immortalized in our records.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

This meeting, which could be historic not for the decisions taken but for those not taken, is being held with the discretion so zealously promoted by some of our colleagues. But at least there will be a verbatim record, and for that record I want to state clearly our profound amazement that we are about to allow ourselves not to react in the only way we logically ought to react.

The meeting began with the danger of an attempt to reduce the important meaning of a message from President Saddam Hussein addressed to President Gorbachev, officially communicated to us by Ambassador Vorontsov, a Permanent Representative deserving of all our respect, and make it out to have been sent merely as a propaganda exercise or ruse of war. Those are the kinds of expressions that will appear when the record of this discreet meeting is distributed to members and non-members of the Council.

Fortunately, Ambassador Al-Anbari subsequently confirmed here that the Government of Iraq had indeed taken the decision earlier communicated to us by Ambassador Vorontsov, who had been informed by President Gorbachev that he had received such a message from Saddam Hussein.

Yet some members, beyond those armed with the deadly weapon of the veto, are disinclined to stop the war and facilitate compliance with Council resolution 660 (1990).

Someone will ask one day whether it had ever been legitimate concern for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Kuwait that motivated certain Powers to do what they are doing - and which is now costing thousands of lives and immeasurable material damage for the peoples of the region and for the entire world - or whether in fact the motivation had always been something else and whether it was for that reason that at a time when there should have been joy or

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satisfaction there was apparently a feeling that someone had caused offense by finally telling us that resolution 660 (1990) was going to be completely implemented.

I heard neither the representative of the Soviet Union nor the representative of Iraq say that in order fully to implement the resolution and thus withdraw Iraqi troops from Kuwait anyone was demanding the nullification or modification, or anything else, of the Council's resolutions.

It has been requested simply that the Council take the basic measures that have always been a part of any process of the withdrawal of military forces in any conflict situation.

No one could seriously think that there can be a withdrawal of military forces under bombardment, under fire, under war conditions.

I invite any of my illustrious colleagues to cite a single such case in history. Many cases - in which the Council has participated actively and diligently - could be cited where in order to effect the withdrawal of military forces from a territory certain basic measures were taken, such as first and foremost a halt to military operations in the region, along with other measures with respect to which the United Nations has long and rich experience in monitoring and verifying that the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal are taking place properly, so that the withdrawal is orderly and safe and that it has the confidence of both the withdrawing forces and the international community, which thus achieves its main objective.

I wonder whether this is the time for us to get bogged down in an elaborate discourse or mediaeval debate on the texts and their interpretation - for which no one has asked.

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I wonder whether this is the moment for us to begin to establish conditions and links which will make one text inseparable from another and will put us in the paradoxical situation - I do not know whether that is the idea of certain colleagues - of our asking Iraq not to withdraw its forces or of the United Nations doing nothing to see that the process takes place in the only way in which it should.

My delegation condemned the war; it was opposed to measures that it considered precipitate, unilateral and arbitrary on the part of the Council. But it voted seriously in favour of resolution 660 (1990), and it seriously requested the Government of Iraq, publicly and privately, to withdraw its forces from Kuwait. When we were officially informed that it had decided to do so, and was beginning the process, we had to hail that decision, because we are consistent in our positions. We have not been indulging in demagoguery, with a false defence of the legitimate rights of Kuwait, which for us are as sacred as those of any other country in the world, great or small.

We are profoundly worried that at a time when the Council should be taking very specific, clear-cut decisions that would permit us finally to achieve implementation of the principal resolution adopted with regard to the crisis - the first resolution, which laid down the basic means for resolving the conflict - the Council will once again be paralysed, will once again fold its arms and allow the war to continue, will go on doing nothing to implement what should be its most cherished resolution.

I do not know how some of my colleagues will explain before history the curious attitude we are witnessing today. If it were just a matter of how to explain tomorrow what is being done today I should not be speaking now, but let us recall that every hour we fail to act, every minute this Council sits with folded

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arms and again - as the Soviet Government said in its statement (S/22265) last Sunday - lets slip a very real chance of securing a peaceful outcome to the conflict without further casualties and destruction, human beings on both sides are paying with their lives for our disquisitions and diplomatic manoeuvring. Those human beings on both sides deserve our respect, and they oblige us here and now in the Security Council to adopt a resolution like the one our colleague from Yemen has proposed.

If the Council does not do so - and the reasons, the machinery, that might prevent it are no secret - at least I can put on record that my delegation rejects this failure to act and wishes to protest vehemently about a truly scandalous situation.

Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) (interpretation from French): I am not accustomed to public debate, and I certainly shall not engage in polemics, because what we have heard this evening is very important. I believe that the communication we received a little while ago from our colleague Ambassador Vorontsov is extremely important. I also believe that what our colleague from Iraq said is extremely important. I believe that we should now put all this to our Governments for consideration, because I hope that it may become the basis of something that is clearly desirable for us all.

Nevertheless, I wish to make just one remark - to our colleague from Iraq. I believe that it would be much easier for the Security Council to arrive at an operational decision on a cease-fire if somewhere in the relevant resolution - either in the preamble or in the operative part - there were a statement that the Security Council notes that the Government of Iraq accepts the application of resolution 660 (1990) and all the other relevant resolutions of the Council. By "relevant resolutions" I simply mean those that put obligations upon Iraq.

That is all I wish to say - and in no polemical spirit - at this stage.

The PRESIDENT: With the concurrence of members of the Council, I shall suspend the meeting now. The time of the resumption of the meeting will be communicated through the Secretariat.

The meeting was suspended at 12.35 a.m., Tuesday, 26 February 1991.